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SUBJECT: INAUGURATION SPEECH DELIVERED BY NEWLY ELECTED
ROMANIAN PRESIDENT TRAIAN BASESCU

1. On December 20, 2004, before a joint session of Parliament, newly elected Romanian President Traian Basescu delivered his inauguration speech.

2. The text of Embassy Bucharest's unofficial translation of President Basescu's inauguration speech follows below:

"Mr. President of the Senate, Mr. President of the Chamber of Deputies, President Ion Iliescu, distinguished MPs of Romania, distinguished representatives of the Diplomatic Core, distinguished representatives of the Church, esteemed citizens, dear compatriots:

Through the democratic will of the people, I have been elected President of Romania. This vote leads me to have greater respect for what I stated when I launched my candidacy for the supreme function of the state - to assure the citizens of this country once again that I will be the President of all Romanians, a powerful, impartial, active President, who will dedicate himself 24 hours a day, seven days a week to the Romanian nation.

This is my promise to the Romanian people. I assure you that the next five years of my Presidential term in office will be years in which Romania will become a different country, a functional country, through applying and respecting the laws, a country which will be made noteworthy through its people. The Romanian nation needs a President who will represent it with dignity, who will work closely with state institutions in order to get Romania out of the sewer of poverty and corruption. I will consider that I have succeeded in my mandate if I succeed in uniting the entire population around the objectives of domestic and foreign policies. We cannot talk about dignifying integration in the E.U. without solving the major problems of Romania - corruption and poverty.

Dear MPs, I assure you that I will collaborate well with state institutions to fight the corruption and poverty that has been eating away at society, at the Romanian public and at the political system. Corruption at a high level provokes poverty. These are two things that are necessary to one another - corruption and poverty. Right now, corruption at a high level represents the most serious danger to [our] national security. We don't need to mask poverty under statistics. Too many retired people have pensions smaller than their heating bills in the winter. Too many peasants live in poverty, no matter how rich the crops are. Too many young people have begun to believe that Romania is no longer a country that has opportunities. This reality must be changed.

To enter life as a poor young person because of an unjust system of promotions and careers is the heaviest burden that a young Romanian can bear. Millions of retired people need a healthy old age, which must be protected by a health insurance system meant to help them, not to bring the ill and the old to desperation when they need medicines and, equally, respect for their years of work. As President of the Supreme Council of National Defense, I will include the fight against high-level corruption in the strategy of defending the country. A fundamental priority of my mandate will also be removing state institutions from political control. I will not accept any political interference in state institutions, which must function according to the Constitution and the laws of the country. They must be immediately de-politicized and put at the service of the citizens. Messrs. MPs, the acute differences between the rural and the urban environments are another major problem of our society.

I want to assure you and all the citizens of this country that there are not several Romanias - there are merely politicians who slice Romania up according to their parties' interests and their power of influence. As President of the state, I will defend and promote the interests of every Romanian citizen, be that citizen peasant, townsman, member of some minority group, child, youngster, pensioner, woman, man, rich or poor. I will be the President of all Romanians in one and the same Romania. I will mediate the relationship with the Parliament stubbornly and in good faith. We need a Parliament that is active and reactive to

the signals from this country's citizens. We must act in such a manner that Romanians begin to trust the political and law institutions of the Romanian state, after 15 years. I will militate for a Parliament that will be an institution that represents the interests of those who have chosen it, and not a mechanism for the interests of political party clients. I will be a dedicated defender of the freedom of the press, which in recent years has experienced serious setbacks due to unparalleled political constraints and pressures, applied against the Romanian media. Confiscating the freedom of the press is the first step to confiscating the freedoms of the citizens.

The successes of democracy cannot take place without the existence of a free press, the right to speech and the freedom of expression. I want to assure you that the new President of Romania will support civil society. Romania needs its civil society to step up its pace in the role of defender and promoter of the rights of every citizen. Education, religion, and culture are the surest and steadiest gates by which the Romanian spirit may enter the family of universal spirits.

I will defend the strategic interests of Romania where foreign policy is concerned and I will make our country a partner with a highly regarded word. I will open the horizons of Romania's foreign policy to all cardinal points, in a moment when our country needs allies, partners, and friends in all the democratic countries of the world. A major priority in foreign policy and in the positive evolution of Romania is integration into the European Union. Integration into the European Union is an element of power in the foreign policy of Romania. The integration process will include both the values of an action based on cooperation with the European Commission, and the values of making the best of the traditional bilateral relations that Romania has with countries such as France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Italy and many other European countries. It is extremely clear that now, after ending the negotiations for integration, the fight for integration takes place inside Romania. Here is the place where we must fulfill the obligations assumed by Romania's government in the process of negotiations. The tough fight to integrate into the E.U. must be won at home. Here is where we must obtain the standards of economic and social compatibility with the European Union.

Another priority in Romania's foreign policy will be to consolidate our position in NATO. It is essential for Romania to obtain a position and an influence that reflect its real value in this organization, but that also reflect its value as a country able to ensure stability south of the Danube and east of the Prut River, developing good relations with the countries of the former Yugoslavia, with Ukraine and with Russia.

We must bear in mind that there are more than six million Romanians who have become citizens of other countries, such as Canada, Australia, the U.S., Germany, France, Spain, Italy and many other countries of the world. We have a duty to re-establish relations with the Romanian diaspora. We have a duty to make these people, who have left their country for one reason or another, feel that the mother-country mourns for them, that their origin country treats them with respect, that Romania is a modern state, a powerful state, a state that respects foreign citizens of Romanian origins, making them feel that they are part of the Romanian people. The Republic of Moldova will benefit from all the openness of the authorities in Bucharest, both in the processes of modernizing the country and in bolstering the sense that part of that country's people are a part of the Romanian people.

Above these priorities, Romania will develop privileged relations with the U.S. and Great Britain, countries with which a strategic partnership has developed even since 1995. Distinguished MPs, we all have a very important mission. If the politicians don't explain to the citizens what the costs of the integration process are, it can be transformed into a failure. We need solidarity regarding integration, in order for every citizen to accept the costs of this process. We need an integration process under which the Romanian people will be united, to be able to enjoy the benefits of joining the E.U. I want us to be united in one common effort, and supported by the modernization of the economy based on the principles of rule of law; a dignified Romania, trusting its future. Belonging to one political party or another must not prevent us from working together for the citizens who have invested us with equal amounts of power and responsibility.

Please allow me to say a special word to the young Parliamentarians. Dear novice Parliamentarians, I want to assure you of one thing: I have great confidence in you, regardless of your political affiliation. Your promotion to the superior forum of this country leads me to congratulate

all those party presidents who nominated you to the Parliamentary lists. I have always been a supporter of rejuvenating the political class, against many skeptical voices. This is why, to convince these skeptics, my wish is that you will be my main collaborators, and I urge you to consider me your supporter. First, you must transform this institution, the Parliament, into a force and an engine of social, political, economical, cultural changes. I have confidence that you will be active and courageous and that you will make all of us who are citizens of this country recognize and change the image of the Romanian politician. I thank you for being here and I hope that you will keep the freshness of your minds and souls.

Parliamentarians, dear Romanians, citizens of my country, I ask you to be near me in the next 5 years. I bear in my soul the flag of Romania and you around it. You have my word as President that I will serve you with power, good faith, and trust. We will be together during all trials and difficulties, but above all we will be together in a better life, marked by victories and success. We will live well, in a Romania of Romanians, a European Romania. So help us God!" End text.

13. Amembassy Bucharest's reporting telegrams, as well as daily press summaries, are available on the Bucharest SIPRNet website: www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/bucharest

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